

Devon and Severn IFCA News

COVID – 19: AIFCA Advice

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) updates for the Inshore Fishing Community and links for support.



The Covid-19 situation is ever changing here in the UK and it is very important that everyone is aware of the latest advice from the UK Government and the health information from the NHS.

We recognise the unprecedented impact that the pandemic is having on fishing business and coastal communities. IFCA are working hard to maintain essential services, support local fishing communities, whilst protecting our own workforce during this very difficult uncertain time.

IFCO's, where it is safe and appropriate to do so will continue to patrol the coast and engage with fishermen and stakeholders. Officers will be following the latest government advice in relation to minimising the spread of the Coronavirus, which may mean officers need to carry out their work in alternative ways.

We are working, where it is safe to do so, to ensure that permits and sampling regimes are maintained as far as is practically possible and our aim is to continue to support coastal communities, the industry and help it to keep fishing and trading; to be ready to recover when the time comes.

We are working very closely with [Defra](#) and our partner agencies including the [Marine Management Organisation](#), [Seafish](#) and [Cefas](#). Through this coordinated network we are liaising directly with industry, and their representatives and our Local Authorities, to support their essential services.

Support and advice for businesses

The UK Government has published updated guidance for businesses, employers and employees. The Government also announced a package of measures to provide support for public services, individuals and businesses affected by Covid-19.

The Marine Management Organisation has established a one stop shop which provides a helpful guide to the support which is available online here;

[Support for fishing industry one stop shop vs3.pdf](#)

Charities supporting the fishing industry

In these uncertain times, there are organisations that can offer advice and practical or financial assistance to fishermen. Visit <https://www.seafish.org/article/coronavirus-updates-for-the-seafood-industry> to find out who to contact, and for other updates on COVID-19 for the seafood industry.

Seafish have listed several organisations who can offer support to fishermen, some of which we have listed below:

[Fishermen's Mission](#)

The Fishermen's Mission provides financial, practical and pastoral support to retired or active fishermen and their families. They assess support required and fill in a grant form which is sent to various charities for funding. Support can be requested for a variety of factors such as hospital transport costs or a new cooker or emotional support. Financial support is provided when payments can no longer be made and they are in arrears – proof and documentation is required. To find out more their website, call 01489 566 910 or email enquiries@fishermensmission.org.uk.

[Seafarer's Advice and Information Line \(SAIL\)](#)

SAIL is part of Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) but it offers specialised for seafarers. It provides independent financial advice on benefit entitlement, HMRC issues, bankruptcy, debt, charity grants, employment, housing and pensions, as well as advice on consumer issues and immigration. They also offer practical support to assist with filling in forms and negotiating with other agencies. To find out more visit their website, call 0800 160 1842 (lines are open week days 10am-4pm) or email advice@sailline.org.uk.

[Shipwrecked Mariners Society](#)

Shipwrecked Mariners Society provides financial and practical assistance to merchant seafarers, fishermen and their dependents. They can support in instances that include debt, illness, disability, unemployment or retirement. To find out more visit their website, call 01243 789 329 or email general@shipwreckedmariners.org.uk.

[Seafarers Hospital Society](#)

Seafarers Hospital Society offer health, welfare and advice to merchant seafarers and fishermen families. To find out more visit their website, call 0800 160 1842 or email admin@seahospital.org.uk.

[BIG WHITE WALL](#)

This is a confidential 24/7 online mental health and wellbeing advice and support service provided by the Seafarers Hospital Society. Visit their website or email theteam@bigwhitewall.com

[Seafarer Support](#)

Seafarer Support guides serving and former UK seafarers and their families towards relevant help in times of need. Their online tool allows users to input basic details then searches their database of over 150 maritime charities to identify those which may be able to provide help. To find out more visit their website or call the freephone helpline on 0800 121 4765.

For more AIFCA news, click [here](#) to visit the AIFCA website.